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THE CONNECTICUT COLLEGE QUARTERLY

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THE CONNECTICUT COLLEGE QUARTERLY

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THE PITCHFORK

by Katherine Renwick '24

THE barn was cold and bare with musty smell,
And darkness stole with stealthy steps around.
The wind outside let forth a fiendish whine,
And I was there with him, with him, alone.
O Why, O God, must I so tempted be?
For I had learned to hate as once I loved.
Yes, hated now my brother for he'd won.
He'd won and I had lost, and I — had lost.
Alone with him — why not? No one could know.
For why should brother his own brother slay?
And he and I had always shown great love.
Remarkable, folks called it, beautiful.
But that was long before I'd shown him — her.
I wish to God he'd died there at my side,
As all unconscious that a day should come
When I should be with murder in my heart,
I led him to her doorstep, there to show
Each of my greatest loves unto the other.
For I had hoped some day that I would wed.
I had the wedding planned with each detail.
But fate had ruled that such things should not be.
And now I wished him dead. I wished him dead.
Had he not won the love that once was mine?
Had he not stolen it? And yet dared smile?
It was his smile that hurt me most of all,

So innocent it was of what he'd done
But still it seemed to say, "I'm conqueror!"
And I must smile and silence keep thru out!
Yet here I had him at my mercy quite;
And there, to tempt me more, a pitchfork lay
Three pronged, of shiny steel, and oh, so sharp.
It beckoned till I shivered in my fear.
Then lo! as in my mind with evil thought
I tried to wreck my conscience and my soul,
From out a stall a grinning devil leaped
Bright red, with horns, the pitchfork was his tail;
And round about him frisked small evil sprites
Like flames, that licked around me and the fork,
And seemed to make me want and want to grasp
The fork that lay so near, and plunge it deep
Into the heart of him, my only brother.
From out the stall loud mutterings and smoke
There came that choked and deafened me. And, too,
I glimpsed below a flaming, yawning hell;
Black fire and thunder, sulphurous gases, smoke,
All joined to make a dungeon horrible.
And as I grasped the fork with quick resolve,
There came from out those depths a shriek of death,
Some soul like mine, with tortures rent, and chained
To spend his days in loathsome toil and fire.
A sudden thought there came to me of her,
That seemed to counteract against the rest.
No more did murder fill my heart with dread,
But love was throned again and all was well.
So much I loved her that her happiness
Was mine; and so I gave to her that love
Which now I cherished, tho so nearly killed.
I gave to her my own, my dearest brother.

THOROUGHFARE OF DREAMS

Alice H. Barrett '25

THE night was black. Biting winds blew along the Street of Nowhere. The thoroughfare was empty save for a queer little brown man who limped wearily along the wind-swept pavement. His face was brown and twisted, but a bit of a whimsical quirk played hide-and-seek in the corners of his mouth, and his eyes, deep brown pools flecked with copper glints,

shone luminously. A shabby pointed cap held down his wisps of hair, and a loose cape was wrapped around his thin body. Over his shoulder he carried a bag, bulky and worn and heavy with unwanted dreams. As the wind lifted his cape there and pulled it here, he seemed like a dry parched autumn leaf. The irregular tapping of his feet on the dark pavement mingled weirdly with the crying wind. He peered searchingly at each doorway that he passed, until, at last, he stopped at the end house — brown shabby and tired even as himself. He scuttled up the dingy steps and rapped timidly. The sound of the knock echoed hollowly in his ears. With a sudden lurch he flung the door wide and entered the long dark hall. His halting step vibrated faintly, and he started half frightened by his own boldness.

"Surely," he murmured, "this is the wrong house. Surely —" But a strained voice suddenly broke through his musings. "Well! — *what* do you want?" He looked around, and shadowed by the lamp from the inner room saw the tallest, thinnest being that his eyes had ever beheld. He chuckled softly to himself. He was so little and she was so tall that he noticed, at first, only her hands, worn rough hands but exquisitely moulded. His glance traveled up the length of her blue cambric dress — blue as the sky on a flaming autumn morning — to her chin, to her tired sad mouth, to her eyes. He eagerly scanned those pain-faded eyes ; then with a choked sigh he looked hurriedly away. What sorrow he saw in their blue-greyness he never whispered, even to his favorite pixie. He swept into the dim room bringing an air of sleepy red poppies and warm dewy sunlight. With a quick jerk he threw his sack down near the hearth where a half-dead fire sputtered lazily. The fire and the lamp cast a subdued light in the low-ceiled room ; but there was need of no other ; for with another sudden twist the little man drew from his bag a brown package tied loosely with a violet string. He patted it gently, smiling his crooked smile at the tall thin woman who had been standing all this time watching him warily, fearfully. His eyes gleamed and glinted and in their depths was the sparkle of a thousand fireflies. As he waited smiling and glowing, the package, with a loud twang, burst through the violet string and out rolled an irregular bumpy object. A flash of light — a soft crackle ! The tall thin woman jumped — the queer little man twinkled and laughed !

* * * * *

The dark walls of the tiny room merged into a beautiful sun-lit garden. Sweet odors and sounds filled the air. Soft breezes caught the ribbons on the light summer dress of a young girl. The tall thin woman beside the twisted man gasped. Why, that was she — in the garden of roses — and memories ! She trembled with the poignancy of remembrance. A youth came along the flags and past the holly-hocks. She watched with misty

eyes as he and the young girl met. She hoped passionately that — but no — as it was then, so was it now. As he began his incoherent plea of love the girl turned from him and with ruthless fingers tore a scarlet poppy into shreds even as she was about to tear the flaming love-flower into pieces.

"I cannot marry you — or anyone! It would be a sin to waste in ceaseless drudgery the great gift I feel I possess. Time, I hope, will prove it more than a dream."

The tall thin woman, her face drawn and wan, still stood beside the little brown man elfishy smiling. She turned to him with a sobbing moan, "Why do you torture me so? — I am afraid . . Who are you? . . don't . . please . . be merciful . ." Her arms rocked in her distress and the tears streaked her white face. The little man was shaken with pity, but he threw a glance at his unwieldy sack — and his pity vanished. The limpid tones of his voice were like tender caressing fingers.

"I am the Dream-Seller Man. Dreams are my stock-in-trade. All the forgotten visions of youth and happiness and innocence come to me and I cherish them until my sack is so heavy that my limbs rebel against its weight! Then—I give them back to those unthinking and worldly ones who gave them life. Now,"—the mellowness flowing out of his voice left it cold and brittle—"my bag, freighted with *your* fancies, is bearing me down. Will you stretch out your hands and take them or must I show you more?" She shrank and cringed from him. With a shrug he turned again to the bag . . . . Again the flash—the crackle!

* * * * *

A shining white and blue nursery with sunlight and shadow touching the walls . . . Children's toys strewn around the floor . . . Soft fairy garments hung on a tiny clothes tree . . . A canary bird threading his sweet notes on a golden stand of sunlight . . . Silver-streaked fish darting happily in a bowl of crystal water . . . A roguish baby with gold curls and sea-blue eyes playing, absorbed in his white wooly lamb . . . The tall thin woman smiled and turned to the baby with a crooning sound. In the happy laugh of the little brown man sounded the tinkle of wintry bells. The nursery vanished.

* * * * *

Silence . . . muffled sobbing . . . a long agonized sigh—"I understand. Leave me with my dreams . . . poor forgotten dreams. Let me try again—" With a nod of approval and a smile that was carefree once again, the Dream-Seller Man grasped his emptied sack and slipped from the room. As he came out into the night the street seemed less dark and lonely. Around him he felt shimmering vivid memories and the rustle of wings. He hummed softly to himself as he limped jauntily down the Street of Nowhere.

* * * * *

The cold morning light streamed palely into the bare room. By the dead ashes sat the woman mumbling to herself. It seemed to her that the room was blurred with misty dreams—white, silver-grey. A tear glistened on her cheek and she dried it with her hand—a slender sensitive hand. . . . The neighbors, curious at the long silence and quiet of the dreary house, found her crooning softly to herself. They knew and pitied; but she only whispered, "Poor little white dreams!"

"—— REPENT AT LEISURE"

by Katherine Swan '26

MISS ALMIRA HIGBY sat rigidly upon her high stool behind the small window of the Plumbville Post Office. She sat, not only rigidly, but firmly, with both feet clamped vigorously on the highest rung of the stool in such a manner as to prop both knees in a position of great solidity against the wall before her. On this particular morning Miss Almira appeared to be troubled, in fact, positively vexed about something, and upon closer inspection, it might be seen that the object of her perturbation was a letter which she held in her hand and which was addressed to Mr. Silas Plimpton in a large angular handwriting.

"Now, that's what I call purty funny," spake the worthy postmistress in a sharp staccato tone to Sarah Simms, her niece who helped every morning at the Post Office and "hired out" during the afternoon. "Here is the the fourth letter this week which Silas Plimpton has got from Boston in the same hand-writing an' he seems mighty sot up over somethin'. Ever since he took t' travellin' to the city to visit that Great Aunt of his'n, he has acted *very* peculia'. Um, yes, *most* peculia'. He seems well nigh out of his head a 'comin' in here every single day, not missin' one, mind you, and buyin' a postage stamp and mailin' a letter!" she shrilled, suddenly loosening her feet from the rung and swinging about viciously on the long suffering Sarah. "And what's more," spoke Miss Almira, her rasping voice rising louder and louder, "he sends every one o' them letters to a *Miss* Mehitable Jenkins. Now what do you think of *that!*" and she accentuated this startling fact by bringing one bony fist down with a crash on the desk directly in front of Miss Simms who was timidly sorting out some two hundred letters which had that day been the allotment to descend upon Plumbville. At this moment there was a creaking and banging of the rickety door which opened in plain view of one who occupied the high stool behind the little window, and Miss Almira, with the agility gained from twenty-five years of uninterrupted experience, swung around again, clamped both her feet back

upon their supporting rung, and peered forth into the room beyond. At the sight of a long stooping figure ambling forward, Miss Almira slid with alacrity from the stool, smoothed the rouching around the neck of her black and white calico gown, settled her silver rimmed spectacles more firmly upon her long pointed nose and smiled engagingly through the narrow opening.

"Good mornin', Silas," she said sweetly; then her thoughts turned again to the mysterious letter, for it was the worthy Mr. Plimpton who had come to claim his daily missive. "What I can't understand is you 'a buyin' a postage stamp every day and sendin' out that letter just as reg'lar! And *who* might Miss Mehitabel Jenkins be? I s'pose you are calculatin' t' send another letter to-day, ain't you?"

"No, Mira, I ain't plannin' on any letter at all. 'Fact is," and Mr. Plimpton shifted from one foot to the other while his long and narrow countenance became redder and redder — "Fact is, Mira, that is to *say*, I'm a'goin' to Boston to-day, and then, Mira, I'm *aimin'* t' get married." With this partial statement of his plans actually exposed, poor Silas lost both courage and poise. His long bony structure seemed to shrink and crumple; he leaned weakly against the post boxes before him, neither daring to stoop and gaze through upon Miss Higby who, from within, had uttered no sound, nor to peer into his box. At last, the horrible moments were over. From behind the bars burst forth in withering scorn —

"*You*, *Silas Plimpton*, a' takin' some high falutin' city Jane to get married to! I s'pose there ain't no one in Plumbville that's good enough — Just how do you think, *Silas Plimpton*, Reverend Hackett will take all this? *You* what's donin' the town out a weddin'! Why, Plumbville ain't had a weddin' in years and now it will have to wait until Aunt Tabitha Smalley's niece fotches up with Ezekiel Church!" Miss Almira was becoming more and more enraged. "Besides, *Silas Plimpton*, how do you figure to explain to Mrs. Timothy Sacks who runs the Ladies Aid? I ain't at all certain that she will welcome in a new member. We ain't calculatin' to bring in any more members this year, — most especially them which don't live in *Plumbville*!" Miss Higby ceased for breath, and to reinstall her spectacles upon her peaked nose.

"But 'Mira I ain't made it clear, I ain't a goin' out-a-town for that — I —."

But this staggering explanation was met by even more violent volleys of wrath than those to which Miss Higby had already given vent, so the hapless Silas grabbed the much discussed letter and departed, his step becoming noticeably lighter as he reached the door which he shut behind him with a ruthless bang. Poor Miss Higby sat down forcibly on her stool and looked with horror-stricken gaze at Sarah Simms who was likewise in a semi-dazed condition. "Did you ever?" gasped Sarah.

"No I never," murmured Miss Higby weakly, for now that Mr. Plimpton had departed, her wrath gave way to sorrow. "To think," said Miss Almira, dazedly, "that Silas who ain't never missed a Wednesday evenin' prayer meetin' with me in nine years would a' come to this! He ain't never spoke serious to me but he knew I favored him more than the Reverend Hackett what's always hintin' about having a woman in the home." Again Miss Higby became indignant. "I'll show Silas Plimpton he can't step out like that without hearin' from me," she spoke up wrathfully. "He'll l'arn I ain't one to be trifled with!" With these words Miss Higby arose, locked the drawer which contained the Post Office valuables, turned the key in the Post Office door and departed with Sarah Simms for their mid-day repast.

Remarkable developments took place that week. Plumbville peeped wide-eyed from behind its window curtains, whispered excitedly behind its porch honey-suckle vines and gossiped volubly over its back fences.

"Almira Higby bought five yards of that silk-backed satin down at Tabitha Smalley's this morning and twelve dozen o' them little gold buttons. I tell you — ther's mischief in the air!"

"It ain't so much that silk an' gold buttons that worries *me*," said Mrs. Timothy Sacks to her sister Melissa Trumble, "It's the peaked look about Parson Hackett and his queer actions. He called on Miss Tucker yesterday afternoon and said he trusted her knuckle rheumatizm was not botherin' her as much of late! *Knuckle* rheumatizm! When he's visited her five odd years and seen her a-sittin' there with her knees knotted up with lumbago! Now what can be ailin' a man's mind to make a mistake like that? Answer me *that*, Miss Melissa! Miss Tucker took a bad turn after he left and it's come pretty nigh bein' the death of her. I tell you—a funeral, what with Ezekial's weddin', would be too much! There's some as thinks that Almira's gone out after him since Silas left and that the Parson's gettin' weak-minded out of sympathy. Sympathy! There's only one feelin' that sets a man ailin' like that and it ain't sympathy, Melissa—it's *love*! And ther's likely just one reason why a woman decks herself out in silk-backed satin an' gold buttons, Melissa, an' that's to trap a man!"

Melissa did not seem to get the full import of her sister's remarks. She was looking down the dusty road, her near-sighted eyes straining to their utmost in the shadow of her sunbonnet. Her sister followed her gaze toward the road.

"Land o' pity! It's Almira herself — a'comin' as if she was sent for!"

Almira was indeed coming apace: hatless, her skirts flying, her elbows turned out sharp angles as she hurried toward them. "Melissy!" she gasped, as she careened through the gate, "I'm to be married to Parson Hackett day after to-morrow! Sarah's tendin' the Post Office for me and I

want you to come help me make up my weddin' dress. Yes'm it's to be a church weddin' day after to-morrow by the parson over from Oakdale. Reverend Hackett and I is to have *our* weddin' right here in Plumbville!"

Almira was happy, flushed, beaming, but it was a hectic joyousness, with an air of triumph and exultation that made Melissa and Mrs. Timothy Sacks exchange uneasy glances as they leaned weakly againstt he fence. Almira to marry the Reverend Hackett, when for nine years she had been constantly courted by Silas Plimpton!

The time passed and quickly the fateful day arrived. The entire population flocked to the little Plumbville church to witness the wedding of Parson Hackett and Miss Higby, and excitement ran high, as Almira, clad gorgeously in white taffeta—trimmed with the inevitable rouching, stalked decisively up the aisle—while the battered pump organ wheezed forth Lohengrin's wedding march. By the time Almira reached the beaming bridegroom who waited before the alter, she was pale and wild-eyed for in the course of her approach she had perceived out of the corner of her eye Silas Plimpton looking at her sorrowfully, almost desperately, while beside him stood a plump and cheerful little gray-haired woman dressed in black.

Somehow Almira managed to stand through the ceremony. Her usual rasping voice was faint and sorrowful as she took her nuptial vows, while the Reverend Hackett gazed upon her unlovely profile rapturously and took his vows in a loud and hearty voice. The ceremony completed, Almira took courage and turned from the alter with triumph flashing from her little green eyes, while the Ladies Aid—headed by the inestimable Mrs. Timothy Sacks dashed up and one by one smacked a kiss on her bony cheek. But the exultation of Mrs. Hackett was short-lived. Silas Plimpton and the little gray-haired woman were approaching, Silas bearing a look of hopelessness and resignation. Mrs. Timothy Sacks drew closer and whispered with a confidential hiss, "Silas Plimpton just come from the city to-day and brung his Aunt Mehitabel Jenkins. She's goin' to stay at Tabitha Smalley's, but seein' as how Silas ain't no housekeeper nor nothin', I reckon she'll fix to stay fer awhile."

"Land a' mercy!" cried poor Almira as, every vestige of victory having departed, she wilted into the protecting and ready arms of the Reverend Hackett.

WHOA SALMON!

FIVE chairs were tilted, all in a row, outside Cap'n Jerry's fish market. Five hats were pulled carefully down over five pairs of eyes to screen the glare from the sunlit water. Grouped about, on the old gray wharf, were innumerable small boys, — little blue-overalled boys, ragged little boys, brown boys with a suggestion of bathing tights on their slim legs, nondescript boys with hoarse young voices. Below, rocking on the green water, was the lobster pot float, and on it gleamed a great white and gray monster — a man-eating shark and beside it was laid a collection of strange odds and ends taken from its stomach. There was a silver table spoon marked with the name "Mansion House", a cut glass top of a vinegar cruet, a handful of beautifully polished deep sea stones and an Indian arrowhead.

One battered straw hat was suddenly pushed back from a grizzled squinting face, as one tilted chair, on one end of the line, clattered forward. Turning about, the owner looked long and hard at the straw hat next in line.

"I kin understand that silver spoon, Jerry, I kin understand that cut glass what-not — I c'ud understand findin' a hul Sound steamer in that fish — but I can't account for that Indian arrer-head!"

A small slim body flashed down from a pile of the wharf, and cut the blue water as quietly and smoothly as a knife, — and an instant later a small shining wet head appeared near the edge of the float. As a brown hand slid furtively toward the silver spoon there was a terrific racket on the wharf above. Cap'n Jerry, who had seemed half asleep up in the sunlight, sat bolt upright in his chair. "Git your hand off that float — blast ye! Try that ag'in an' I'll sink ye in a lobster pot!"

Then, tilting back into line, he seemed never to have moved or spoken.

"Well, don't puzzle your head too hard over it 'Lon, - fish 're funny critters — But a man eatin' shark ain't a circumstance t' land-locked salmon!" Chuckling softly, he felt for his pipe. Jerry was "getting set" for a yarn — the other four sensed it. A chair was shifted, a straw hat was shoved back for an instant — all to indicate that they heard, they sensed what was to come and were interested. To show some such indication was a subtle unwritten law in fish market and wharf etiquette. It was as necessary as tipping one's hat to a lady, — and, bless me, if it didn't bring quite as happy results! "I s'pose ye all remember that minister ol' Davis, who waz so fond o' trying to fish and o' hearin' us all cuss 'round here?" asked Jerry from under his hat and a cloud of smoke. "Well—" as the four straw headgears made mute signs that those beneath remembered,—"ol' Davis had

a place up in those mountains, the Adirondacks, up in New York State, an' nothin'must do 'bout twenty-five year ago, but I should go up thar fishin' — fishin', mind ye, in a pond — a fresh water pond!"

A gull screamed as he circled low. A small brown body again clipped the water from out of the restless noisy little group on the wharf — and smoke, poured warningly from under Cap'n Jerry's hat brim. But this time the dripping little head circled elaborately around the float and disappeared in the cool greenness under the dock.

"I didn't hanker for fresh water much, —— but I went 'cause I thought a deal o' the man, even if he wuz a minister. Wee-ll, it wuz for all the world like child's play —— that fishin' trip. T'want 'til I was settin' on a rock, with my line in, that Davis told me the pond wuz stocked! They have these here —— nurseries —— where they raise an' take care o' little salmon fishes 'til they can stand the change o' climate an' then they turn 'em loose in the lakes an' ponds fer people to catch."

"I guess whalin' days spiled me fer any such fun as that, but anyway I sat on that rock an' fished. We pulled 'em in right an' left —— big salmon an' little ones. I felt kinda ashamed t' see poor little fish just out o' their cradles come up t' my hook. But Davis had the time o' his life! The little ones didn't seem to bother him much. He pulled in the big ones an' threw back the babies! An' those fish didn't seem to know anything. They didn't have anywhere near the brains that salt water fish have! They wuz so crazy to bite that some of them that Davis throwed back in, come over an' bit my line. An' then I'd heave' em back in an' darned if they didn't turn right 'round an' bite agin —— same fish —— mind ye!"

"Finally — after I'd throwed back the same little salmon four o' five times I got tired of it —— and calc'lated I'd teach that salmon a lesson. I had a little tin whistle somewheres in my jeans 'n I snapped it into his tail with a little tin ring. I figured that it would sink him, hold him down near bottom a spell, and give the rest of the fish in that pond a chance!"

"We-e-ll, it took seven odd years fer me to fergit that fishnin' trip. I didn't hold it agin' Davis any, 'cause the poor devil wuz a minister anyway an' not like other folks. But it wuzn't 'til after he'd had sciatica so bad, that I would listen to goin' agin. So I went, just t' humor him."

"They wuz the same salmon — only more of 'em. Trout wazn't so bad up-stream, but Davis hankered for them hot-house fish. What with pullen' 'em in, an' throwin' back the little ones, my arm got pretty lame."

Four of the straw hats were shoved back, and four pairs of quizzical eyes turned and looked hard at Cap'n Jerry, but he puffed quietly at his pipe— the just visible mouth and jaw below his hat brim straight and sober as he continued.

"We-e-ll — I got pretty sick of it an' quit baitin' my line — thinkin' maybe the crazy fish would start a stampede over t' Davis' line —— since heenjoyed it so much — an' let me be. Just as I had settled back fer a smoke an' a nap, 'long come a bite that pulled me clean t' my feet. I hauled on that line fer all I wuz worth an' there wuz moanin', mind ye, low moanin' like a human voice comin' from that hook, an' out o' that splashin' an' commotion come a sight wuth seein'."

Four chairs had tilted forward and four listeners sat upright with straw hats shoved back excitedly,—— expectantly. The small boys quarrelled hoarsely, shrilly on the wharf. Gulls by twos and threes, swooped daringly over the dead shark, screaming challenges to one another.

"We-e-ll, bless me, if I didn't land a seventy-pound salmon with a fog horn in his tail! An' recollect gentlemen —— seven odd years before, I snapped a tin whistle —— but thar, it's noontime an' I clean forgot Miss Peabody's mackerel. She'll have my hide! *Mornin'* gentlemen!"

THE ORIGIN OF THE ATTIC COMEDY

by Olivia Johnson '24

PEOPLE about me were working with serious intensity on large black note-books and ponderous texts. I counted the pages of reference reading yet uncompleted, sighed, loosed my fancy on the four-masted schooner marked with delicate frailty against the dim blue of far sky and seas relaxed under the caress of a May-sweet and sea-fresh breeze, and then, with conscious heroism, brought my eyes and mind back to the Library.

But suddenly there popped out at me from a shelf on the level with my eye, in black type on canary yellow "The Origin of the Attic Comedy". I smiled with an inward, secret mirth, soft and delicious. It was no classical joke which delighted me, no thought of hillside amphitheatres and the robed beauty of Ancient Greece, but the memory of the days when professor Coffee-Tea-Bubbles flew to the moon in an airship patented before the Wright Brothers were ever heard of,— a ship made by hanging an inverted table from two beams by ropes fastened to its four legs.

I also remembered how, later, we nailed the gate that had once kept us from falling down stairs onto the attic beams, and how Charles and Prentice made an elevator from the baby-carriage top, swung like a cradle, and hoisted by a rope thrown over the beam. I was always raised to a precarious seat on "The Crow's Nest" by this elevator, but the boys and my more courageous sister climbed up by the windows,— from sill to division of the sashes, to the top of the frame,— and then stepped the dangerous distance

from beam to beam till they reached the gate, a little "isle of safety". Once Charles and Prentice had a contest of speed and skill to see who could, with greatest accuracy and highest celerity, expectorate into an empty malted milk jar placed below at convenient range.

And then there was the perfect pulpit, a contrivance of two steps that Father had made so that in our very diminutive years we could see over the stone wall which enclosed our side veranda. More vividly than some of the sermons I have heard from famous men do I remember the one preached me from that pulpit by my sister on the text of Decency. "Be decent. Decent is the word," she would oft repeat. "If you are decent you are everything."

Behind an old horse-hair sofa there opened a small, dark tunnel, a space under the eaves, whose mouth the builders had not bothered to cover. With the aid of an electric search-light we would crawl down this hole, the first man with the light, the others following close upon his heels in single file. Sitting at the end of the tunnel in a free space left under the pointed top of a tower on the house, we would feel utterly inaccessable, as thrillingly cut off from the world as tho in Ali Baba's treasure cavern.

There was a chink thru the wall of this tunnel which opened into the maid's closet, and until everybody got familiar with the trick, it was marvellously funny to call "Ready" thru that chink, when hiding in the closet, and make the "It" of "Hide-and-go-Seek" hunt for you behind the sofa, or even crawl down the tunnel, leaving you a chance to shout "In free!" as you slapped the friendly red bricks of the chimney which was always "Home".

The attic was also a favorite stage for the enactment of a "tragical-comical-historical-pastoral" given always under the alluring title of "He and She" and running into any action or plot which suited the two actors at the moment of presentation. This play was formless, endless, oft-repeated. Somewhat akin to it was the game of "Glass Hall" in which a parasol, long skirt and a dignified walk were the most important features.

Oh, many were the comedies enacted in our attic, but I have not yet attempted to explain their origin. They seem to be an outbreak among children as common as measles, for I never knew a child with an attic who did not put it to personal and strange uses suggested by the vivid fancies of a young mind. But why is the attic the chosen field of activity? I have a theory which suggested itself to me. Far, far back in the black past of our race, before the "dawn of History" had even streaked our sky we were arboreal creatures. The young, then as always, were full of adventure. They must have rivalled each other in making daring ascents thru the branches, up to the slender, bending tips, which would support the weight

only of the very young. There they swung in a rivalry of daring. The old folks sat below on the stouter branches, watching indulgently, tho sometimes with a quick intake of breath, the hazardous hardihood of their off-spring. And so the custom sprang up of leaving the youngsters the top of the house for their especial enterprises, and true to their propensities they climb high, while the old folks sit below and dream . . . . .

THE VILLAGE

by Cyrilly Abels '26

WE, LIKE the inhabitants of The Village, are all seekers, some seekers of beauty, some seekers of knowledge, some seekers of a nebulous something we cannot express.

The Village differs from Paris' artistic center, the famous Latin Quarter. There the young artists live in garrets frequented by that species of scavenger know in common parlance as rats. In The Village the basements offer the seemingly sought for hardships in the form of dampness, and dim lights furnished by candles (anything for the sake of atmosphere!) To begin with, it may be well to distinguish between the real village and the places, that exist there just to meet with the outsiders' crude and erroneous conception of it. These places can be marked from afar; they draw a boisterous element. The "Pirates Den" (a stable converted into a den where everything is done to keep patrons in constant titillation) illustrates, quite obviously, this make believe for visitors.

At first sight the entire village seems to consist of nothing but teahouses; they do abound in goodly number. A differentiation must be made again between the type that is patronized by the villagers and the other kind,the make believe that can be separated from the villager's haunt by its marked crassness and that is epitomized so well in the "Pepper Pot". In illustration of the authentic, what more delightful place can be found than "Three Steps Down"? One's interest is engaged from the very beginning, or, at any rate, as soon as one knows that its founder is Simeon Strunsky. Food can be bought there for a third of uptown prices. Its very atmosphere induces a feeling of homelikeness. One waits on oneself, one depends on one's own brain the mathematical calculation of one's bill, and then one pays it without a question (excepting its total) to the person acting as cashier. Who would

care to go to the "Pepper Pot" with all its implication after that? Grace's Garret is one of the few teahouses frequented by both the villager and the visitor. Its walls (after one has climbed the rickety old stairs in order to reach the welcome of its one square room) offer invitation for further scrutiny. Like those in many of the other teahouses, they are covered with interesting poems, epigrams, aphorisms, parodoxes and caricatures.

Upon deeper investigation of its crooked little streets with their crooked little houses it can be seen that there is more to the village than just teahouses, which are a rather salient feature. In Carmine Street, the house Poe lived in has long been replaced by a pretentious apartment. Macdougal Alley smacks of Montmartre, with its stables converted into comfortable studios. Quaint old houses, where sojourned Lord Amherst, George Washington, Vice-president Adams, and Aaron Burr, stand on the site of Richmond Hill. Stoke's Grove Street Studio near Sheridan Square is delightfully hidden in the quarter around which the society of several generations ago made merry. The Italian Church on Minetta Street still stands quaint and antique in its typically Italian setting. Once upon a time Minetta Brook ran there. Frank Shay's Bookshop is the place to which my footsteps are directed most of the time. It resembles other bookshops as far as supply of books goes, but on its walls it has signatures — and sometimes even a verse or a line or two of prose, from the pen of many a savant. Among those I chance to remember now are Christopher Morley, William McFee and Amy Lowell.

As the setting forms an intrinsic part of a play so this back-ground has been essential for the setting of my characters, the frequenters of The Village. The "Sea of Hungry Faces" is the phrase brought to my mind each time I traverse this district of Washington Square. The flapper types — poor overworked flapper! — are well represented. They go into such places as the "Pepper Pot". "Are they there just because it is the thing to do? Are they just 'restless'? Are they seeking wildness? Do they go to indulge whims forbidden in their homes?" These are some of the questions that arise as one sees their curious "searching" look. Then there are occasional business men, seeking the place where food can be obtained at a low cost. The true village artist stands out — sometimes. More often the question comes up, "Is he a business man, is he a visitor, or is he a veritable artist?" . . . Then there are faces that cannot be put into any definite category, just — Faces in the Street. There is one that suggests a wood nymph: haughty Artemis, Lightning, Dreams, Coruscating Flame, "Lys Rouge", Sunrise, an Iconoclast. Another recalls the weeping willow to one's mind. Another conjures a picture of Puck, a bashful child, a subtle enchantress. . . . . Again — a

sprig of scarlet verbina. . . . . And soft shadows . . . Moonlight sparkling on still waters . . . . Eyes that intimate autumn leaves, reveal mountain tops . . .

Just — Faces in the Street . . . all hungry . . . seeking seeking, *seeking* . . . .

THE PRINCESS WHO COULD NOT PRAY

by Caroline K. N. Francke '23

ONCE upon a time there was a king who had one child. This child was a daughter, a Princess whose hair was like pale silk and whose white hands the moon had kissed. Slender, she was, and light as a wind-tossed flower. All the people of the kingdom cared deeply for their Princess, and her father, the king, loved her with a very great love. But in the heart of the king there dwelt an eternal sorrow, for, though she was good and pure, the Princess worshipped not the gods of her father. The king was a righteous man and daily he prayed that the Princess might believe, and that she might be forgiven her one sin. For, in the eyes of the king, she had one sin. She danced! And because she danced he grieved and mourned for her. And although the Princess loved him with all her heart at the sound of the lute or the harp, at the lilt of a song, or even at the lark's melody she danced.

The king held deep in his heart one hope. Someday a young Prince would come and then, he thought, the Princess would forget her dancing and remember her father's gods!

One day with a clattering of steel and a fluttering of banners, the young Prince came. He went to the king, and doffing his plumed hat, and bowing low, he spoke thus:

"Oh, King!" he said, "I have come to you that I may ask the hand of your daughter in marriage. My lands are broad and fair, my people kind — and in my heart there sings a mighty love, so loud it sings! I hardly know how you can hear my words above the song!"

"Prince," said the king, "In my kingdom it is the custom for the royal Princess at her betrothal ceremony in the temple to offer a prayer, both for herself and for her betrothed. My daughter will not pray. If you can make her pray, her hand is yours!"

Then the Prince went to the Princess and told her of his love, and of the words of the king.

She answered him. "Beloved, my heart is as full of love as the buttercup of sunshine, or the oriole's throat of song. All my love is yours, surely out of its depths I shall find words with which to pray at my betrothal feast."

When the Prince kissed and left her, the Princess ran out into the garden to dance to the blossoms, and to a butterfly fluttering in the flowers.

On the day of her betrothal a great fear grew in the heart of the Princess. When the time had come and she waited outside the temple doors for the solemn march to begin she felt that she could endure it no longer. There were no words at her command when she most needed words to win her Prince. As the first chords of the march throbbed in the air the Princess caught her breath in terror, then she saw hovering near the little butterfly from her garden, and she took it in her hand and sobbed.

"Oh, Little Butterfly! Little brother, help me now or I must lose my Prince, for I cannot pray."

The butterfly flew from her pale hand in through the open window of the great temple. Up to the organ it fluttered, its wings catching light from the tall windows! The organist saw it, and the great chords died under his fingers. Quick as the butterfly's wings the music leapt through the temple.

The Princess, waiting outside the heavy doors felt in her heart the response. She loved, and the music was calling. Into the hush and the dim light she slipped and stood for a moment listening. The crowds of people, the white-robed priests, her father, the king, she did not see at all. The music was a torrent of silver notes pouring through the silence. Moonlight she saw — the glint of frosted branches, and poppies bowing low before the wind. And so she danced, danced like the thistle's silvery down, swift-blown, danced like a nymph who has known love. With her slim arms high above her head she leapt, and turned, and leapt again. And when the music died she knew what she had done, and she dropped on the marble floor, and her hair, spread out like a pool of gold, gleamed in the light of many candles.

In the terrible silence the king arose. White-faced, he was, and full of pain and wrath!

"Princess," he said, "you came into the temple of my Gods to pray!"

But the Princess, lying as one dead upon the marble floor, stirred not, and his voice faded into echoes through the stillness.

Then from his place before the altar the wise man of the kingdom rose. He was very old! He had known the king's father and the king's grandfather, and his hair was silvery white. With a voice like the voice of the organ he cried aloud:

"Reverend Sir! Most mighty king. Chide her not! For lo! I say unto you —— the Princess has prayed!"

There was silence again, and the king looked long at the hushed faces of his people, and at the Princess lying at his feet, and slowly bowed his head.

Then the young prince ran forward and lifted the Princess gently to her feet, and the butterfly flew quietly out into the sunlight!

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